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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/29/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UNSC](#)

SUBJECT: ARAB LEAGUE, OIC, NAM DELEGATION SEEKS SECURITY COUNCIL CALL FOR GAZA, WEST BANK CEASE-FIRE MONITORED BY INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS

REF: USUN 412

Classified By: Amb. Zalmay Khalilzad. E.O 12958. Reasons 1.4 (B&D).

¶1. (C) As anticipated reftel, a joint Arab League/OIC/NAM delegation met May 25 meeting with Ambassador Khalilzad in his capacity as President of the Security Council to request Security Council action to bring an end to the violence in Gaza. The delegation, headed by Egyptian PR Maged Abdelaziz (Arab League), included Cuban Charge Ileana Mordocche (NAM), Pakistani PR Munir Akram (OIC), Senegalese PR Paul Badji (Committee for the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People), Palestinian Permanent Observer Riyadh Mansour, Arab League Permanent Observer Yahya Mahmassani and Qatari PR Nassir Abdulaziz al-Nasser (Security Council member). They asked that the Security Council assume its responsibility and call for a cease-fire in Gaza, that the cease-fire be extended to the West Bank, and with the possibility of establishing a monitoring mechanism of international observers. Both the NAM and the OIC have issued statements urging the same.

¶2. (C) Palestinian Permanent Observer Riyadh Mansour, repeating arguments reported reftel, said that the extension of the cease-fire to the West Bank would enable President Abbas to pressure all Palestinian factions to honor a complete cease-fire. As it stands now, he said, it is difficult to maintain the cease-fire in Gaza because Palestinian factions in Gaza respond in frustration there to Israeli actions on the West Bank. He said that in recent days, five Palestinian factions have pledged to President Abbas that they would all honor a truly comprehensive cease-fire.

¶3. (C) Ambassador Khalilzad said he would transmit the delegation's message to the members of the Security Council in a timely manner. Then, responding in his national capacity, Ambassador Khalilzad delivered the points provided by Department. Ambassador Khalilzad began by saying that we are concerned by the violence; that the firing of Qassam rockets is an effort to divert attention away from Palestinian factional violence; that we welcome President Abbas' call for an end to violence; and that Israel has the right to act in self-defense, though we encourage avoidance of civilian casualties and are concerned with the detention of elected members of the Palestinian government and legislature.

¶4. (C) Addressing the delegation's specific request, Ambassador Khalilzad said that although we support a resumption of the cease-fire in Gaza, Hamas instigated this latest round of violence and the onus is therefore on Hamas to stop firing rockets and state and demonstrate clearly that it will abide by a cease-fire in Gaza. Moreover, Ambassador said, a real cease-fire must be in place in Gaza before an extension to the West Bank could be considered. With respect

to the proposal for a monitoring mechanism with international observers, Ambassador Khalilzad said, the immediate priority is an end to the violence in Gaza and the return of law and order, without which an international observer mission would be impractical and ineffective. Finally, Ambassador Khalilzad said that the U.S. considers the Quartet rather than the Security Council to be the appropriate forum for addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Quartet Principals will likely address the situation in Gaza at its May 30 meeting in Berlin. Ambassador Khalilzad said that the OIC, Arab League and NAM can all play important roles by urging calm, exerting pressure on those parties engaged in violence and terrorism and by supporting President Abbas and Arab moderates in the pursuit of peace.

15. (C) Comment: The tenor of the presentation suggests to us that the entities represented by the delegation are feeling the pressure to show their constituencies they have acted in response to the crisis in Gaza -- in this case by challenging the Security Council to act. In that event, we may be able to satisfy their request with a Press Statement calling for a cease-fire, with language drawn from Department talking points. Would appreciate Department's views on such an approach. End Comment.  
KHALILZAD